

## Special preview from the OFBCI

Before it hits the *IndyStar* this weekend, we wanted to give you a special preview of our executive director's new OpEd



*Jim Huston*

## A call to greater service and volunteerism

*By Jim Huston*  
*Executive Director*

During major tragedies, publicity about volunteerism takes center stage. The floods of 2008 come to mind and, most recently, the March tornadoes that swept through southern Indiana. Thousands of Hoosiers responded within the first week (and are still going

strong) showing their love for their fellow Hoosiers by picking up rubble and rebuilding homes and businesses.

The same kind of love for neighbors presented itself in the aftermath of the slaughter of Sikhs in Milwaukee. Hoosiers rallied behind their Sikh brothers and sisters, sharing their love for their neighbors and the expressions of good will from their own faith background.

Though it was 51 years ago when President John F. Kennedy urged Americans to, "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country", the acts of service to tornado victims and the outpouring of good will to our Sikh brothers show that his message still resonates. When President Kennedy spoke of a love for the country we share that is exemplified by service, he delivered a message that transcended political and religious boundaries.

We know it transcends because service and volunteerism happen every day beyond times of conspicuous need. We should never forget the time, sacrifice, and love Hoosiers share every day when you see a volunteer in your local hospital, food bank, shelter, victims assistance facility, local school, blood drive, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, or someone undertaking valuable service projects through Kiwanis, Rotary, or any of the great civic organizations, and on and on.

Why do people step forward to serve? In Indiana, it is evident that they love their fellow Hoosiers and want to get involved in something bigger than self. Great faiths give that gift to many, and offer it to all. The rewards for doing so are plentiful.

Recognizing these integral contributions to communities, Governor Daniels created the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) in 2005. The first of the OFBCI's twin pillar missions is to connect faith-based organizations

and nonprofits with state agencies that have opportunities to partner in meeting human needs. The second is to lift up service and volunteerism as a cultural attainment.

The OFBCI invites you to join in as we work to lift up the spirit and culture of service and volunteerism. This year's effort includes a partnership with The Polis Center's SAVI Community Information System to host the premier event for faith-based groups and nonprofits seeking to do even greater good: the Governor's Conference on Service and Nonprofit Capacity Building. The conference will be held at the Marten House in Indianapolis and the OFBCI encourages you to get more information available at [www.savi.org/conference](http://www.savi.org/conference).

Complementing the conference, Governor Daniels has invited his agency heads to meet directly with faith leaders from Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism as well as nonprofit leadership at his Human Needs Summit. As times are tough and budgets get tighter, especially budgets dependent on funds from Washington, D.C., we should prepare to serve together as never before. Faith organizations offer something government cannot, but both state and faith have a common purpose in mitigating suffering, healing lives, and helping families in need. Partnering with those already disposed to serve only makes sense.

As we look around our communities, we must recognize that there are Hoosiers in need and that some are our neighbors. Resist the temptation to look the other way by saying "someone else, like government, will take care of them". Get involved and serve something bigger than self. For more information please visit [in.gov/ofbci/volunteer](http://in.gov/ofbci/volunteer).



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